



Priority Letters Phase I

User Manual

Health Eligibility Center (HEC) Module

Patch IVMB*2*453

October 2000

Department of Veterans Affairs
VISTA Technical Services

Preface

The Priority Letters Phase I User Manual is designed to assist a range of users in fully utilizing all functions offered by the product. The software and this manual are targeted primarily for Information Resource Management (IRM) staff at the Health Eligibility Center (HEC).

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Overview

Background

Priority Letters is one of the results of a suit brought forward by the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association (EPVA) informing veterans of their enrollment priorities and appeal rights. The VHA currently sends enrollment letters to veterans notifying them of their enrollment in the VHA Health Care system. However, the notification letter does not contain the veteran's enrollment priority grouping. There is no other notification from VHA that provides veterans with this information. The Priority Letters Project was developed by VHA with the goal of modifying its current enrollment notification process by including information on the enrollees assigned enrollment priority grouping and if applicable sub-priority.

The project has been divided into two phases:

- Phase 1 - Mail enrollment priority letters to all enrolled veterans with known priority levels and include enrollment priority with all new initial enrollment welcome letters.
- Phase 2 (function list still tentative) - Notify veterans that their means tests are about to expire. Notify veterans when they are disenrolled. Notify veterans that their applications cannot be processed further due to missing or unverified eligibility data. Define Priority 7 subcategories.

Functionality

The Priority Letters Phase I patch provides the HEC with the ability to:

- Calculate sub-priority for Priority 7 veterans
- Mail one-time letters to currently enrolled veterans
- Mail ongoing welcome letters to newly enrolled veterans
- Report on the status of Priority Letters Phase I mailings

Integration

The Priority Letters Phase I patch provides functionality does not affect other packages.

Related Manual

- Priority Letters Phase I Technical Manual

Using the Software

Activate 600B and 600C Letters

During installation, the 600B - Notify Enrollee of Priority (new one time letter) and 600C - V2 Notification of Enrollment (Welcome Letter) are added to the DCD LETTERS file (300.11). IRM personnel must activate these letters using the IVMD Edit Letter option. IVME SUPERVISOR key is required to activate these letters.

De-Activate 600A Letter

The previous version of the Welcome Letter is superseded by the new version, 600C - V2 Notification of Enrollment. IRM personnel must deactivate 600A using the IVMD Edit Letter option. IVME SUPERVISOR key is required to deactivate the letter.

Re-mail Enrollment Priority Notification

To remail the enrollment letter with priority:

1. From the Service Center Menu, select Mail/Remail Letter.

```
1      Enter/Edit Address Information
2      Enter/Edit Date of Death
3      Enter/Edit Enrollment Status
4      Review Case Menu ...
5      Correspondence Status Report
6      View Veteran Enrollment Correspondence
7      Enrollment Correspondence Error/Reject Listing
8      Mail/Remail Enrollment Letter
9      Enrollment Correspondence returned by Post Office
```

Select Service Center Menu Option: **8 Mail/Remail Enrollment Letter**

2. From the Mail/Remail Enrollment Letter List, enter 2 Select Patient and press <ENTER>.

```
AYCB LETTERS                      Oct 10, 2000 09:56:26          Page:    1 of    1
                                Health Eligibility Center
                                Mail/Re-mail Enrollment Letter List
---Letter Description-----Form #-----Mail-----Remail-
1  Enrollment Notification Letter          600A          0          1
2  Enrollment Priority Group 7 Notification Letter  607A          0          0
3  Enrollment (Presumptive Priority) Notification Le 607B          0          0
4  Enrollment (Presumptive PG 5) Notification Letter 605A          0          0
5  Second Welcome to Enrolled Priority 7 Vets      607C
6  NOTIFY ENROLLEE OF PRIORITY                600B          0          16
7  V2 NOTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT              600C        4782          5
```

```
-----Enter ?? for more actions-----
1  Print List          2  Select Patient          3  Quit
Select Action: Quit// 2  Select Patient
```

3. Once the veteran has been selected, answer Yes to Is this the Correct Veteran?

Is this the correct veteran? NO// **yes YES**

4. From the Veteran's Correspondence History list, enter 3 Remail Letter

```
AYCB PATIENT LETTER              Oct 10, 2000 09:59:18          Page:    1 of    1
                                Health Eligibility Center
                                Veteran's Correspondence History for PUBLICO,NOTARIO M. - 363808084
---Letter Description-----Form #-Date-----Status-----
1  Enrollment Notification Letter          600A  SEP 15, 1998  MAILED BY AAC
2  NOTIFY ENROLLEE OF PRIORITY            600B  SEP 18, 2000  RESEND
```

```
-----Enter ?? for more actions-----
1  Print List          3  Remail Letter
2  Mail Letter         4  Select Patient
Select Action: Quit// 3  Remail Letter
```

5. Enter the number that corresponds to the Notify Enrollee of Priority (600B) letter you want to resend.

Select Letter to Remail: : (1-2): 2

6. Review the veteran's address information. If it is correct, enter Y and press <ENTER> to remail the letter to the current address. If the address information is not correct, press <ENTER> and correct the address as necessary.

Veteran Address: 9999 MAIN ST
ANYTOWN
MI
48103-3944

Is this information correct? NO// **yes** YES

7. Answer Yes to the question Do you want to mail letter? NO//

Do you want to mail letter? NO// **YES**

You will return to the Veteran's Correspondence History screen. Note that the letter is queued for remailing.

AYCB PATIENT LETTER Oct 10, 2000 10:09:15 Page: 1 of 1
Health Eligibility Center
Veteran's Correspondence History for PUBLICO,NOTARIO M. - 9999999999
---Letter Description-----Form #-Date-----Status-----
1 Enrollment Notification Letter 600A SEP 15, 1998 MAILED BY AAC
2 NOTIFY ENROLLEE OF PRIORITY 600B SEP 18, 2000 RESEND

-----REMAIL Letter Queued-----
1 Print List 3 Remail Letter
2 Mail Letter 4 Select Patient
Select Action: Quit//

Correspondence Status Report

Follow these steps to display the Correspondence Status Report for the new priority-related letters (600b and 600c)

1. At the Service Center menu, enter 5 [Correspondence Status Report] and press <ENTER>.

```
1      Enter/Edit Address Information
2      Enter/Edit Date of Death
3      Enter/Edit Enrollment Status
4      Review Case Menu ...
5      Correspondence Status Report
6      View Veteran Enrollment Correspondence
7      Enrollment Correspondence Error/Reject Listing
8      Mail/Remail Enrollment Letter
9      Enrollment Correspondence returned by Post Office
```

Select Service Center Menu Option: **5 Correspondence Status Report**

2. At the Select Enrollment Letter(s) prompt, type 600b and press <ENTER>.

Select Enrollment Letter(s): ALL// **600b** **742-600B** **NOTIFY ENROLLEE OF PR**
RIORITY

3. At the Another letter prompt, type 600c and press <ENTER>.

Another letter: 600c 742-600C V2 NOTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

4. At the Another letter prompt, press <ENTER> without typing anything.
5. At the Select Priority Code prompt, enter the number that corresponds to the first priority group you want to report progress on and press <ENTER>. To see a report for all priority groups, enter ALL and press <ENTER>.

Select one of the following:

```
1      GROUP 1
2      GROUP 2
3      GROUP 3
4      GROUP 4
5      GROUP 5
6      GROUP 6
7      GROUP 7
ALL    ALL GROUPS
```

Select Priority Code: NONE// : **7 GROUP 7**

6. At the Another Priority Code prompt, enter the number corresponding to additional priority groups. Repeat the process until all the desired priority groups are selected. To stop the selection process, press <ENTER> without entering a priority group.

Another Priority Code: <ENTER>

7. If you selected Group 7, select the sub-priorities to include in the report and press <ENTER>.

Select one of the following:

1	a
3	c
ALL	ALL GROUPS

Select Enrollment Sub-Priority : **ALL** GROUPS

8. At the Select Report Begin Date prompt, enter the start of the range of dates you want to report on and press <ENTER>.

Select Report Begin Date: **10012000**

9. At the Select Report End Date prompt, enter the end date and press <ENTER>.

Select Report End Date: (10/1/2000 - 10/11/2000): **10112000**

10. Select an output device and press <ENTER>.

Report generation may take several minutes.
It is advisable to queue this report!

DEVICE: HOME// **Printer** <ENTER> GENERIC INCOMING TELNET

11. After it has finished processing, the report will appear at the specified output device. See the next page for an example.

Correspondence Status Report

Report Begin Date: OCT 1,2000

Report End Date: OCT 11,2000

Run Date: OCT 11,2000

Enrollment Letter(s): 600B 600C

Priority Code(s): ALL

Letter: 600B NOTIFY ENROLLEE OF PRIORITY

Status	Count		
7:MAILED BY AAC	4	Priority 1	1
		Priority 3	1
		Priority 5	1
		Priority 7c	1
TOTAL			4

Letter: 600C V2 NOTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

Status	Count		
	4783	Priority 1	1
		Priority 3	1
		Priority 6	4779
		Priority 7a	2
1:SENT TO AAC	36	Priority 1	1
		Priority 5	2
		Priority 6	33
3:REJECT AT HEC	41	Priority 1	2
		Priority 6	34
		Priority 7a	1
		Priority 7c	4
4:REJECT BY AAC	62	Priority 1	7
		Priority 2	4
		Priority 3	7
		Priority 4	4
		Priority 5	10
		Priority 6	11
		Priority 7a	10
		Priority 7c	9
7:MAILED BY AAC	76	Priority 1	1
		Priority 2	1
		Priority 3	2
		Priority 5	1
		Priority 6	69
		Priority 7a	2
TOTAL			4998

End of Report

Glossary

Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AAC	Austin Automation Center
DCD	Data Collection Division
DHCP	Decentralized Hospital Computer Program
EGT	Enrollment Group Threshold
EPVA	Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association
HEC	Health Eligibility Center
HL7	Health Level Seven
IRM	Information Resources Management
IVM	Income Verification Match
MVR	Master Veteran Record
OPP	Office of Policy and Planning
SLA	Service Level Agreement (between HEC & AAC mail center)
SRS	Software Requirement Specification
VA	Veterans Affairs
VHA	Veterans Health Administration
VAMC	Veterans Affairs Medical Center
VISN	Veteran Integrated Service Networks
VISTA	Veterans Health Information System and Technology Architecture. Both the HEC and VAMC systems are a part of VISTA.
VIVA	Veterans Information and Verification Access program

Definitions

Terminology	Definition
Austin Automation Center (AAC)	This organization works in coordination with HEC to support national enrollment mailings, data requests, and data storage.
Disenrollment	Process by which veterans who were previously enrolled are no longer enrolled.

Terminology	Definition
Enrollment	A process to identify veterans who are eligible for VA benefits, where they are likely to seek this care, and identifying attributes that may suggest the level of care they may need (i.e.; home health, long term care, etc.). This process will enable VA to better plan for and therefore deliver services to its customers. The National Enrollment process is a mandate from congress and outlined in the Eligibility Reform Act of 1996, Public Law 104-262. It is a critical component in managing the delivery of high quality, cost effective health care.
Enrollment Group Threshold (EGT)	The Secretary of the VA has the responsibility for determining how many veterans shall be eligible for enrollment into the VA Healthcare System. If it is determined that the VHA does not have sufficient funds to enroll all eligible veterans, enrollment shall be based on the priority groupings established under the regulations of Public Law 104-262, the Veterans Healthcare Eligibility Reform Act of 1996.
Enrollment History	A log of enrollment records for a specific patient that lists the effective date, enrollment status, enrollment priority, and date/time enrollment entered. This history lists the most recent enrollment record first, according to its effective date.
Health Level Seven (HL7)	ANSI standard for electronic data exchange in healthcare environments.
Health Eligibility Center (HEC)	This organization, based in Atlanta, is chartered to provide national customer support for enrollment and manage an interim national database for enrollment.
Income Verification Match (IVM), Version 2.0	VA software that provides the functionality to verify income information for veterans whose eligibility for medical care at VA facilities is based on income. The income verification process for VHA is centralized and performed at the HEC.
Message	The atomic unit of HL7 data transferred between systems. It is comprised of a group of segments in a defined sequence.
Reenrollment	Process by which veterans whose enrollment cycle has ended are enrolled again.
Segment	The logical grouping of HL7 data fields.
Threshold (above/below)	Enrollment Priority 1 is the highest and 7 the lowest (in ranking). If the Threshold is 6 and the Enrollment Priority is 5, the enrollment priority is considered to be above the threshold. If the threshold is 5 and the enrollment priority is 6, the enrollment priority is considered to be below the threshold. Above threshold is enrolled, below threshold is not enrolled. If the EGT Threshold and the Enrollment Priority are the same (both 6) then veterans with an Enrollment Priority of 6 would continue to be enrolled.

Terminology	Definition
Trigger Event	The event that initiates the exchange of HL7 messages.

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Sample 600C - Enrollment Welcome Letter

[DATE]

[NAME]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY, ST ZIP]

Dear [Mr./Ms.][name]:

I am pleased to confirm your enrollment with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system. Enrollment, which occurs on a year-to-year basis, gives you access to a broad range of VA health care services anywhere in the country. Preventive care, primary care, and inpatient and outpatient services are available through VA. You can use these services even if you have Medicare, Medicaid, Department of Defense, or private health insurance coverage.

You are currently enrolled in priority group **(stuffing routine to fill in priority group value)**. If you feel you have been enrolled in the wrong priority group and wish to appeal your classification, you may call the VA Health Benefits Service Center for assistance at 1-877-222-VETS (toll free service).

If your current enrollment Priority Group is 4, 5, 6, or 7 and you received a Purple Heart, you are eligible to be reassigned to Priority Group 3. . VA is in the process of upgrading its computer system to accommodate the Purple Heart enrollment status. If you received a Purple Heart Award, please refer to the Attachment for details on informing VA of your award. Assignment to this new status will be made as soon as the required computer upgrades are completed. You will receive a separate notification when that occurs.

Should you choose to cancel your enrollment for any reason, please notify VA in writing at the following address: VA Health Eligibility Center, 1644 Tullie Circle, Atlanta, Georgia 30329.

Information about enrollment priority groups, your appeal rights and some frequently asked questions and answers are enclosed. Should you have any questions, please contact us at the toll-free number, 1-877-222-VETS (1-877-222-8387).

Thank you for enrolling with the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system. We will do our best to provide you health care that is second to none.

Sincerely,

Kenneth J. Clark

Chief Network Officer

Enclosure

Sample 600B - One-Time Priority Grouping Notification

[DATE]

[NAME]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY, ST ZIP]

Dear [Mr./Ms.][name]:

In a previous mailing, you were notified of your enrollment in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system. You are currently enrolled in priority **group (stuffing routine to fill in priority group value)**. If you feel you have been enrolled in the wrong priority group and wish to appeal your classification, you may call the VA Health Benefits Service Center for assistance at 1-877-222-VETS (toll free service).

If your current enrollment Priority Group is 4, 5, 6, or 7 and you received a Purple Heart, you are eligible to be reassigned to Priority Group 3. VA is in the process of upgrading its computer system to accommodate the Purple Heart enrollment status. If you received a Purple Heart Award, please see the Attachment for details on informing VA of your award. Assignment to this new status will be made as soon as the required computer upgrades are completed. You will receive a separate notification when that occurs.

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Sincerely,

Kenneth J. Clark

Chief Network Officer

Enclosure

Sample Enrollment Frequently Asked Questions

Enclosure



VA HEALTH CARE AND ENROLLMENT

Congress has required that after October 1, 1998, most veterans must be enrolled to receive VA hospital and outpatient care. Congress has also expanded the range of medical services that enrolled veterans may receive. Veterans may apply for enrollment at any time. Here are some common questions about enrollment and benefits:

I previously received an Enrollment Welcome letter, why am I receiving a second letter? You received this letter to inform you that your enrollment in the VA health care system has been continued for another enrollment year. The letter also provides information regarding your enrollment priority group status, which was not included in the previous mailing.

If I am enrolled with VA, what benefits will I receive? Veterans in the VA health care system will be eligible to receive necessary hospital and outpatient services, including preventive and primary care. These services include: diagnostic and treatment services; rehabilitation; mental health and substance abuse treatment; home health, respite and hospice care; and drugs in conjunction with VA treatment.

If I am enrolled, what cost will there be for me? There is not a monthly premium required to use VA care. However, you may have to agree to pay some co-payments. If you have insurance, it may cover the cost of the co-payments. For hospital care, the co-payment is the same as the Medicare inpatient deductible for the first 90-day period of care (\$776 in calendar year 2000) and \$10 for each day of care. For outpatient care, the per visit co-payment is 20% of the average cost of a VA outpatient visit (\$50.80 calendar year 2000). There is also a \$2 co-payment for each 30-day supply of prescription drugs.

Is this an insurance policy or an HMO? It is neither. VA health benefits are established by Federal law and regulations and funded through appropriations. They are not the same as an insurance contract. Also, veterans do not pay monthly premiums to receive VA health care. In addition, you are not required to use VA as your exclusive health care provider. If you have health insurance, or eligibility for other programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, or CHAMPUS, you may continue to use services under those programs. We recommend that, if you have other insurance or HMO coverage, you should keep that coverage to provide you with options and flexibility in the future.

Are there any restrictions on getting care in private facilities at VA expense? Yes. Care in private facilities at VA expense is provided only under certain circumstances. To determine if you are eligible for private care at VA expense, you will need to contact the nearest VA health care facility.

Will VA pay for care in private facilities? Usually not. VA provides care in private facilities at VA expense when VA has a contract arrangement for certain services or, under very limited circumstances, when VA approves the care in advance.

What is the coverage for emergency services? VA provides urgent and limited emergency care in VA facilities. However, VA's ability to pay for emergency care in non-VA facilities is very limited. The Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act has authorized VA to expand emergency care coverage. Refer to the last paragraph for additional details.

What If I get sick while on travel? You may receive health care at any VA health care facility in the country. To minimize any "out-of-pocket" expenses while traveling, you should familiarize yourself with the location of any VA health care facilities in the area. VA's authority to reimburse you for care in non-VA facilities is very limited.

If enrolled, can I get dental care? In general, dental benefits are limited to service-connected dental conditions or to veterans who are permanently and totally disabled from service-connected causes. For specifics, contact the VA health-benefits advisor at your local VA health care facility.

Will VA take care of my nursing home needs? Nursing home care in VA or private nursing homes may be provided to certain veterans as space and resources permit. The Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act has authorized VA to expand long-term care services. Refer to the last paragraph for additional details. To determine if you are eligible for VA nursing home care, you will need to contact the nearest VA health care facility.

What Priority Group are veterans assigned to if they were awarded the Purple Heart? Veterans who were awarded the Purple Heart are assigned to Priority Group 3. However, verification of proof is required. Proof of documentation must be submitted to the VA health care facility responsible for your medical care. After VA verifies the document(s) you submitted, appropriated changes will be made to your Priority Group classification. VA is in the process of upgrading its computer system to accommodate the Purple Heart enrollment status. Assignment to this new status will be made as soon as the required upgrades are completed. Affected veterans will receive a separate notification when that occurs.

Will VA provide hearing aids and eyeglasses? Yes, if you are receiving VA care and are service-disabled with a disability rating of 10% or greater or are a former POW. Otherwise, hearing aids and eyeglasses will only be provided in special circumstances, and not for generally occurring hearing or vision loss.

What kinds of maternity services are available? VA provides maternity care, but cannot provide care to a newborn child, even in the immediate aftermath of the birth. The veteran mother must make other arrangements for payment for the care of the child.

Are there any limits on days of hospital care or outpatient visits VA will provide? No, your treating physician will determine what is considered appropriate and necessary hospital care or outpatient services and will provide such care consistent with current medical care practices.

Are there any plans to further expand VA's health care benefits? On November 30, 1999, the President signed Public Law 106-117, the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act. This legislation authorizes VA to expand long-term care services and to reimburse for the emergency treatment of certain enrolled veterans. The law also requires VA enroll veterans awarded the Purple Heart into Priority Group Three. VA is currently in the process of drafting regulations required to implement these new authorities. For specifics, contact the Health Benefits Service Center at 877-222-VETS(8387).

Enrollment Priority Group Fact Sheet



Enrollment Priority Groups Health Care Fact Sheet

VA Healthcare Enrollment Priority Groups



Priority Group 1

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 50% or more disabling

Priority Group 2

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 30% or 40% disabling

Priority Group 3

- Veterans who are former POWs
- Veterans awarded the Purple Heart
- Veterans whose discharge was for a disability that was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty
- Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 10% or 20% disabling
- Veterans awarded special eligibility classification under Title 38, U.S.C., Section 1151, "benefits for individuals disabled by treatment or vocational rehabilitation"

Priority Group 4

- Veterans who are receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits
- Veterans who have been determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled

Priority Group 5

- Nonservice-connected veterans and service-connected veterans rated 0% disabled whose annual income and net worth are below the established dollar threshold

Priority Group 6

- All other eligible veterans who are not required to make co-payments for their care, including:
- World War I and Mexican Border War veterans
- Veterans receiving care solely for disabilities resulting from exposure to toxic substances, radiation or for disorders associated with service in the Gulf War; or for any illness associated with service in combat in a war after the Gulf War or during a period of hostility after November 11, 1998
- Compensable 0% service-connected veterans

Priority Group 7

- (a) noncompensable 0% service-connected veterans and
- (c) all other priority category 7 veterans with income and net worth above the statutory threshold who agree to pay specified co-payment

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